



Island County Public Health School COVID-19 Response Toolkit

2022-2023 Academic Year

Updated 8/24/2022



**Island County Public Health (ICPH)
School COVID-19 Response Toolkit
2022-2023 Academic Year**

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Island County Public Health Key Contacts

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Key Requirements and Guidance

The key requirements that Island County Public Health (ICPH) follows are in the Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) [Requirements and Guidance to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in K-12 Schools and Childcare](#). Other important requirements and guidance that are referenced include the [CDC Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#) and the [Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) COVID-19 Guidance & Resources](#).

Using a layered approach to implement requirements will protect students, teachers, and staff and make in-person learning as safe as possible. This toolkit contains recommendations and links to requirements, guidance, and resources to help schools implement a layered prevention and response plan. Using a combination of strategies is important because there is no one intervention that is perfect at preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Sections of this toolkit are subject to change throughout the school year as requirements and guidance are updated so please make sure you are using the most recent version. The most recent version will be posted on the Island County Public Health webpage. A bulletin will also be sent out to our contact list periodically and will contain data summaries as well as information on new requirements and guidance as they are released.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following describes roles and responsibilities in public and private schools to facilitate COVID-19 prevention and response efforts. This process will streamline communication and ensure timely and consistent responses. The required and suggested roles and communication flow are described in the table and flow chart below.

Public Schools

Each district will appoint one District COVID-19 Coordinator who will serve as the 1) main point of contact for schools within the district, and 2) liaison between ICPH and public schools within the district. Each district should also appoint a back-up District COVID-19 Coordinator. Assigning this role to someone other than the superintendent is recommended as we anticipate the person in this role will be involved with day-to-day response and operations, and the superintendent may not have the available time and capacity for this.

Suggested Roles for School Districts

There are also suggested roles and teams within each school that will help in response efforts and communication. The suggested roles are school level coordinators to work with teams of staff that will be involved with COVID-19 prevention and response within the school and will report to the district coordinator.

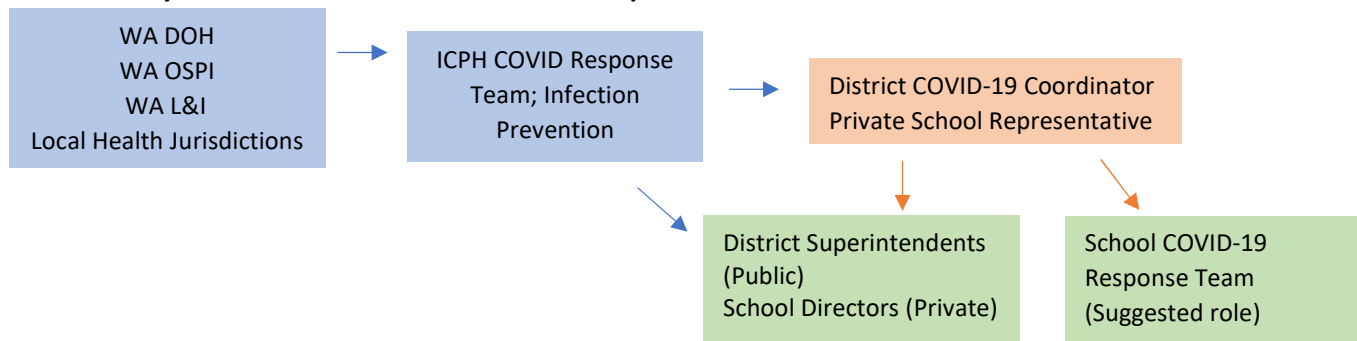
Private Schools

Each private school will assign a Private School Representative who will serve as the main point of contact for ICPH. Due to the small size of some private schools, the School Director may be the most logical choice for this role. However, another staff person within the school may be assigned to this role.

Island County School COVID-19 Prevention and Response Roles and Responsibilities

<p>Island County Public Health COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Response Team REQUIRED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with District COVID-19 Coordinator on guidance, protocols, case reporting, and contact tracing. • Link school districts to resources on COVID-19 mitigation and best practices. • Provide contact tracing support for close contact lists/line lists and coordination with WA DOH who is conducting case investigation. • Meets monthly with District COVID-19 Coordinators. • Meets quarterly with school district superintendents. • Meets as needed with school nurses.
<p>District COVID-19 Coordinator(s) and Private School Representative REQUIRED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serves as a liaison to the Island County Public Health Infection Prevention team. • Informs Island County Public Health Infection Prevention team about confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases in each school. • Maintains and updates School Case & Close Contact List Template for the district. • Distributes protocols, procedures, and resources to the School COVID-19 Coordinator(s). • Updates protocols, procedures, and school resources as new or revised guidance from CDC and WA DOH becomes available. • Serves as the point-of-contact for questions and information for the community-at-large as well as related stakeholders/school district partners.
<p>School COVID-19 Coordinator(s) SUGGESTED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides resources and information about COVID-19 and quarantine/isolation to ill staff and families of ill students, such as fact sheets for families and staff. • Serves as liaison to District COVID-19 Coordinator. Sends completed School Case & Close Contact List Template to District COVID-19 Coordinator and alerts them to COVID-19 positive cases in school. • Manages internal and external communications regarding outbreak status of the school. • Serves as the point-of-contact to answer questions and provide information for staff/students/families. • Notifies close contacts of COVID-19 positive student/staff of the exposure and need to quarantine. • Maintains a list of classrooms and other cohorts with dates of when COVID-19 positive student/staff have been present while infectious. • Notifies all families and staff in a cohort when a COVID-19 positive student/staff has been present in school during the infectious period.
<p>School COVID-19 Response Team SUGGESTED</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing Coordinator: Coordinates COVID-19 diagnostic and screening testing at the school. • School Nurse/Administrative Staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isolates potential cases and ensures they are promptly and safely released to a parent, legal guardian, or emergency contact. ○ Monitors return to school for confirmed cases. ○ Gathers information on cases and contacts. ○ Manages PPE Inventory. • Facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintains and updates cleaning and disinfecting protocols and procedures. ○ Facilitates cleaning and disinfecting protocols of affected areas ○ Assesses ventilation and encourages improvements and promotes practices that are feasible for each school building.

Island County School COVID-19 Prevention and Response Communication Flow



Definition of Case and Close Contact

ICPH is using the WA DOH definitions for case and close contact:

- A case is someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 using a viral test, including a PCR or antigen when given through a CLIA waived facility.
- A close contact is someone who was within six feet of a person with COVID-19 for at least 15 cumulative minutes over a 24-hour period during the time when the person with COVID-19 was infectious.
- The infectious period of someone with COVID-19 starts two days before the onset of symptoms or is estimated as two days before the positive test collection date if someone with COVID-19 is asymptomatic.
- Please see the [Symptom Decision Tree and Contact Tracing Checklist for K-12 Schools](#)

Reporting Cases and Close Contacts

- Cases should be reported to WA DOH and to ICPH.
- Allowing ICPH staff to view spreadsheets of cases that are updated by school staff is acceptable if schools let ICPH know that will be the method they use for reporting cases.
- Test results are reported to WA DOH in the following ways:
 - If tests are administered and analyzed at the school, results can be reported using Simple Report or providing a daily line list to Melissa Hartmann.
 - If tests are administered and then sent to a laboratory for processing, the laboratory uses electronic laboratory reporting to report to the WA DOH.
 - If the school hears of an at-home test, please ask them to report to Island County Public Health and inform Melissa Hartmann. They may use the [online form](#) or call 360-678-2301 to speak with staff and report their test result.
- Schools do not have to supply close contact lists unless they require assistance from ICPH for contact tracing. Please let ICPH know if you need assistance.
- Reporting requirements and guidance from CDC: [Guidance for SARS-CoV-2 Point-of-Care and Rapid Testing | CDC](#)

Isolation and Quarantine

- Use this decision tree to determine isolation periods for symptomatic students and staff and close contacts: [COVID-19 Symptom Decision Trees for Schools \(wa.gov\)](#)

Testing

- WA DOH [Testing in Schools Homepage](#)
- K-12 schools are required to ensure access to timely diagnostic testing for students and staff with symptoms or who were potentially exposed and want to test.
- DOH has extended the Learn to Return program to provide test kits so schools can continue to test onsite and help meet this requirement.
- Information about self-testing here: [Interim SARS-CoV-2 Self-Testing Guidance \(wa.gov\)](#)

- [Testing FAQs - Learn to Return](#)

Vaccine Information

- [Vaccine Information :: Washington State Department of Health](#)
- Schools should have a process in place to verify student and staff vaccinations. Acceptable documentation for verifying vaccination status is in section 3 of the [Governor's Proclamation 21-14.1](#)
- Vaccine locator: Vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov
- Information on verifying employee vaccination status can be found in [L&I Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19](#)
- [Is it a HIPAA Violation to Ask for Proof of Vaccine Status? \(hipaajournal.com\)](#)

Masking

- While masking is no longer required for school related activities, it is still an effective mitigation tool and recommended in certain situations (such as returning from isolation after having COVID until day 10).
- The benefits of wearing masks have been demonstrated in many studies and is summarized here: [Science Brief: Community Use of Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#)
- [Your Guide to Masks | CDC](#)
- [Types of Masks and Respirators | CDC](#)

Hand Hygiene and Cough Etiquette

Both routine hand washing and good cough etiquette can prevent the spread of COVID-19. Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is one of the best ways to prevent COVID-19 and other pathogens from spreading in the classroom and school. While it takes time to teach and practice good hand hygiene and cough etiquette, it is worth the effort to minimize time that students and staff may have to isolate due to COVID-19.

Handwashing

- Give students time to wash their hands with warm water and soap.
- Use fragrance-free hand soap that is approved and supplied by the school.
- Only use hand sanitizer when handwashing stations are not available.
- Never use disinfectant wipes on skin.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer or hand sanitizing wipes that are fragrance-free.
- Make sure hand sanitizer has not been recalled by the FDA by checking this [webpage](#)

Cough etiquette

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing OR use your elbow if there are no tissues.
- Cough and sneeze away from people if possible.
- Use the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use.
- Wash your hands after disposing of tissues.

Resources

- [Posters | Handwashing | CDC](#)
- [How do I protect my family and myself from germs found on surfaces COVID.pdf \(pehsu.net\)](#)
- [How to Use the Hand Sanitizer List on FDA's Website](#)
- Hand washing video from King County, talks about schools reopening for 2021, but it is still a relevant demonstration for handwashing: [Handwashing in Schools and Childcare Facilities - YouTube](#)
- [CDC Cover your Cough poster](#)

Special Situations

Mealtimes

- Eat outside when the weather allows.
- Assign seats so contact tracing is easier.
- Space children out as much as possible at meal and snack time, with a minimum of 6 foot spacing and consider going outside or using a larger space such as the lunchroom, instead of the classroom.
- Try staggered schedules to minimize the number of students eating together at one time.

Transportation

- Keep windows and vents open on school buses if possible.
- Space children out on the school bus as much as possible.
- Assign seats so contact tracing is easier.
- Try staggered pick up and drop off schedules to limit the number of children on buses at one time.
- Do not routinely spray disinfectants in school buses while children are present.

Ventilation and Filtration

Improving ventilation and filtration is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy. In addition to lowering the risk of transmission of airborne infectious diseases like COVID-19, increased ventilation and better filtration also help with student performance and improve respiratory health of students and staff spending time in the classroom. Below are some key points and resources to help with planning and implementation.

- Bring in as much outdoor air as possible by opening doors and windows and using child-safe fans to blow indoor air to the outside and outdoor air to the inside.
- Service HVAC equipment and replace filters regularly. Use higher grade (MERV 13+) filters if possible. Make sure to hire a trained and certified contractor or technician for servicing.
- Use portable air cleaners that use HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters. Select air cleaners that are certified from a reputable agency, such as the EPA or California Air Resources Board. There are many companies making claims that are exaggerated and that may even emit harmful pollutants, such as ozone.

Resources

- [CDC Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs](#)
- [Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Schools | US EPA](#)
- [Improving Indoor Air Quality in California Schools - Western Cooling Efficiency Center \(ucdavis.edu\)](#)
- [5 Step Guide to Checking Ventilation Rates in Classrooms – Schools For Health](#)
- [List of CARB-Certified Air Cleaning Devices | California Air Resources Board](#)
- This link discusses going back to school in 2021, but the information on improving ventilation is still relevant if you have not had a chance to analyze your HVAC system: [Improving Ventilation in Schools, Colleges, and Universities to Prevent COVID-19 | U.S. Department of Education](#)

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting

Trained janitorial staff should be responsible for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting in schools. Each school should have an infection prevention and control plan with details on cleaning schedules and appropriate chemicals and products. Below are some key points and resources to help in developing the plan.

- Clean high touch surfaces routinely using a safe cleaning product. Soap and warm water are all that is needed for general cleaning.
- Avoid foggers, misters, electrostatic sprayers, vaporizers, and aerosol cans. Aerosolized chemicals can stay in the air for a long time and irritate the skin, eyes, or airways of people. Some of these products trigger asthma and children may be especially sensitive.

- Never leave products for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting within the reach of children except school approved and supplied hand soap at washing stations.

Resources

- [CDC guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- [EPA list of disinfectants for use against COVID-19](#)
- [University of Washington Safer Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting Strategies to Reduce and Prevent COVID-19 Transmission](#)
- [PEHSU \(Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units\) fact sheets, infographics, webinars, and comic strips on safer cleaner and disinfectant use](#)
- [Green cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting: A toolkit for early care and education](#)
 - Scroll through this webpage for links to the green cleaning toolkit, posters, and fact sheets.
- [Toxics Use Reduction Institute Safer Cleaning and Disinfection for Schools](#)

Sports and Performing Arts

- WA DOH has removed all requirements for screening testing in sports populations. It is recommended to follow appropriate mitigation methods, including testing when available and feasible.
- If a student or staff member is excluded from school due to COVID infection, they are also excluded from school related extracurricular activities during that time.
- Check the *Activity Guidelines FAQ* from [Washington Interscholastic Activities Association \(WIAA\)](#) for helpful clarification on WA DOH athletics requirements.

Additional Resources

Maintaining a Safe Workplace

- ICPH staff are available for on-site infection prevention advice upon request. Please [email](#) Melissa Hartmann or Susan Wagner if you are interested in this service.
- WA L&I consultation service for employer questions about schools: [Request Consultation \(wa.gov\)](#)
 - This is a free service. No fines or penalties will result from issues uncovered during a consultation. However, consultants will ask you to correct any serious issues and help if necessary.
- Accident prevention program templates: [Accident Prevention Program \(APP\) \(wa.gov\)](#)
 - An accident prevention program is required for schools, including strategies for protecting employees from COVID-19.

Reporting Violations

Island County Public Health provides information on preventing and managing the spread of COVID-19 based on the best available evidence and guidance from CDC, WA DOH, and other reputable organizations. We do not enforce requirements. If there are violations to report, options are as follows:

- Use the chain of command within the school. Contact a supervisor, union representative, principal, or superintendent and notify them of the violation.
- Contact the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
 - Contact information is [here](#)
 - How to file a complaint with OSPI is [here](#)
- Report a violation using one of the following:
 - State of Washington [online form](#)
 - Washington State Department of Health [COVID-19 Information Hotline](#)
 - Washington State Labor and Industries safety complaint number 1-800-423-7233
 - Washington State Labor and Industries safety complaint online form is available [here](#)